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License Fees Due for Georgia's Child Care Programs

New State Law Requires Verification of Lawful Presence in the United States

ATLANTA, Ga., (November 28, 2012) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) says December is the time that annual license fees are due from Georgia's approximately 6,300 child care learning centers, group day care homes and family day care homes. Fees vary based on the number of children in the facility but the maximum amount is \$250 for larger child care learning centers.

The official due date is **December 1, 2012**, however, state law provides for a 30-day "grace period" in which providers can pay their license fees without penalty through **December 31, 2012**. Payments received on or after **January 1, 2013**, will be assessed a late fee of half the provider's annual license fee. License revocations begin **February 1, 2013**, for providers that have not paid license fees by that time.

Under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. Section 50-36-1), anyone applying for a public benefit is now required to verify their lawful presence in the United States with Secure and Verifiable documents. This can include a US passport, driver's license or other photo identification. A DECAL license or registration is a public benefit issued to the owner of a child care facility each year. Therefore, the owner must submit the required Secure and Verifiable documents before the annual license will be issued.

As of this week, 23% of the child care programs had paid their annual license fees and 43% had returned affidavits showing verification of lawful presence.

Some state agencies have reported delays as a result of the new requirement, however, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services Kay Hellwig says the process is going well for DECAL. “We have moved some folks around to help with the demand and don’t foresee any delays,” she explained. “Our consultants and office staff have done an excellent job of making providers aware of the new requirement and that has helped tremendously.”

More information on the new requirement along with frequently asked questions can be found at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/ChildCareServices/LawfulPresenceVerification.aspx>. You can also send an e-mail to CCSAffidavit@decal.ga.gov; or call 404-657-5562.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.